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THE BIBLE EASILY UNDERSTOOD.

PROVERBS, VIII. 8, 9.

*All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing foward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.*

The person speaking in this chapter is called wisdom; by which may be meant the wisdom of God personified, or God himself denominated by one of his essential perfections; as we often say, the Eternal, or the Almighty, when we mean God himself. We may therefore consider God himself as saying in the text, "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing foward or perverse in them.—They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." By him that understandeth and them that find knowledge, Solomon means good men, or those who have a wise and understanding heart, in distinction from sinners, who are

under the dominion of a depraved, perverse, selfish heart. This is evident from a parallel passage in the 14th chapter; "A scorner seeketh knowledge, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth." By those who understand, or find knowledge, he means those who have a spiritual discernment of spiritual things, arising from the benevolence, or goodness of their hearts. Such good men, God says in the text, can easily find the knowledge of the plain and important truths which he has revealed in his word. They find nothing foward, or unrighteous, or unreasonable, in any of his declarations, or precepts, or prohibitions, or promises, or threatenings, though scorners view them as foward and false, and inconsistent, and absurd.

This truth, therefore, lies upon the very face of the text,

That good men find it easy to understand the word of God. I shall,

I. Show that the word of God is easy to be understood; and,

II. Show that good men find it to be so.

I. The first thing to be shown is, that the word of God is easy to be understood. This is a point, that needs to be proved, because it is so generally disbelieved and denied. Many suppose, that it is not necessary, nor even possible for any of mankind to understand it, and know that they understand it. But there are some good reasons to believe, that the Bible is really easy to be understood.—For,

1. God designed to *reveal* his will in his word. The Bible contains a revelation of his will to men of all ages, characters, conditions, and capacities, whether old or young, whether rich or poor, whether learned or unlearned, and whether possessed of larger or smaller capacities. God viewed all classes of men as standing in equal need of a revelation of his will, and meant to make it plain and intelligible to all. It is a solecism in language, and an absurdity in nature, that God should make a revelation of his will which should not reveal it, but conceal it. It was not necessary, nor proper, that he should make known all his will in his word; but it was necessary and proper, that what he proposed to reveal, should be revealed in a plain and intelligible manner. And there can be no question whether he was able to give a revelation of his will, that should be plain to every capacity. For he who forms the minds of men,

perfectly knows all that variety which he makes in their intellectual powers. He knows, that they are all rational and immortal creatures, and possess all the mental faculties which render them moral agents, and proper subjects of moral government. He is able, therefore, to give them such commands, as they are capable of understanding and obeying, and which shall lay them under moral and indispensable obligations to obey. And this he has actually done in his word. All the essential precepts and prohibitions, promises and threatenings in the Bible are level to the lowest understanding. The way to heaven, which God has revealed, is a way of holiness, and so plain, that way-faring-men, though fools, have no need to err in it. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” As God meant to reveal his mind and will to mankind in his word, so it contains as plain a revelation as his infinite wisdom and goodness could make.

2. God has revealed in his word, his supreme and ultimate end in all his works of creation, providence and redemption; which is to give the most perfect display of all his perfections, in promoting his own glory, and the greatest holiness and happiness of the intelligent creation. This is the

greatest and best end that he could possibly propose in all his works, and the most easy to be understood by all his rational creatures. When he tells them that, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things ; and that for his pleasure, they are, and were created," a very child may understand his meaning. A very child knows what is done for itself, and not for another ; and what God means by saying, "that he has made all things *for himself.*" This great and good design in all its branches and means of accomplishing it, comprises a complete, consistent, and connected system of divine truths, which renders the Scriptures of more easy understanding and interpretation, than any human compositions, which are always more or less unconnected and inconsistent. We always find, that the more clearly any author expresses his design, and the more consistently and connectedly he writes, the more easy it is to understand his meaning in the various parts and passages of his book. The connection and consistency, therefore, which run through the Bible, render it more easy to understand, than any other book of the same magnitude and antiquity. Though some parts of the Bible are historical, some prophetical, and some doctrinal ; yet they are all connected and consistent with each other, and with God's ultimate and supreme end in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption. If God did intend

before the foundation of the world, to make the fullest and brightest display of all his perfections in all his works ; the whole history of his conduct towards his creatures, and of their conduct towards him, is perfectly connected and consistent with his original and eternal design, and just such a history as we might justly expect to find in his word. The account he has given us of his creating the heavens and the earth, angels and men ; of his conduct towards the angels that stood and fell, of his conduct towards man in his primitive and lapsed state ; and of his conduct towards his degenerate and sinful posterity, from age to age, appears to be perfectly consistent with his original purpose ; and therefore easy to be understood and believed. The prophetical parts of the Bible are connected and consistent with each other, and with the historical parts of it, as well as with the great and good design, which runs through the whole sacred volume. All the predictions in the Bible, concerning future events, from the beginning of the world to the millennium and general judgment, are in perfect harmony and connection with the first great and gracious prediction, that "*the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.*" And this is a key, which all expositors may use in explaining prophecies of things past or to come. Though they may find it difficult to discover the true meaning of prophecies, which re-

main to be fulfilled ; yet they may certainly know, that they respect events, which will some way or other, promote the work of man's redemption, and will be sooner or later, easily understood. The same harmony and connection run through all the principal and fundamental doctrines of divine revelation. They are all inseparably linked together in that eternal purpose, which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And the links in this golden chain of doctrines we find clearly and distinctly mentioned in the eighth of Romans. " We know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his *purpose*. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here we find the doctrine of election flowing from the doctrine of divine decrees ; the doctrine of regeneration or effectual calling flowing from the purpose of God in sending Christ into the world to save sinners ; the doctrine of justification flowing from the doctrine of regeneration, and the doctrine of the final salvation of believers, flowing from their justification through the atonement of Christ. Now it has been universally acknowledged by all orthodox christians from the apostles' days to the present time, that the doctrine of decrees, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of atonement, the doctrine of the regeneration of sinners, the doctrine of their justification by faith in Christ, and the doctrine of their final perseverance in holiness to eternal life, are the cardinal, fundamental and essential doctrines of the Bible. And if these doctrines are perfectly connected and consistent with each other, and all minor doctrines are connected and consistent with these ; then all the doctrines of the Bible are connected and consistent, not only with themselves, but with all the historical and prophetical parts of Scripture, and with God's supreme and ultimate end in the creation of the world. Further, the harmony and consistency of the Bible extend to the preceptive and prohibitory part of it. It contains a vast variety of commands, promises, and threatenings ; and these are entirely consistent and connected, and commend themselves to every man's reason and conscience in the world. The first and great commandment requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. The second, which is like unto it, requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. And on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets ;—That is, all the commands in the Bible, are of the same na-

ture, are clothed with the same divine authority, and are equally holy, just and good. It is easy to see the reasonableness of these commands, either in the relation we bear to God and he bears to us, or in the circumstances in which he has placed us in this world.— And his promises to our obedience and his threatenings to our disobedience, are as good and as just, as the commands to which they are annexed, and as easy to understand.

3. The truths, which God has revealed in his word are not only plain and important; but expressed in a plain and intelligible manner. The style of Scripture is that middle style, which is below the language of the learned, and above the language of the vulgar, and which is commonly used by the great majority of mankind.— And though it is very often highly figurative; yet the figures are plain and obvious, being generally taken from the most common and well known objects in nature. The inspired penmen “speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” The language of inspiration is the plainest and best, that infinite wisdom could suggest. Not only the language, but the method in which God has revealed his will in his word, is extremely plain and easy to understand. It requires no philosophical, or metaphysical reasoning to discover the facts, the characters, the doctrines, and the du-

ties taught in the Bible. Accordingly, it has always been a fact, that men of common abilities and mental improvements, have understood the Bible, better than the wise and learned men of the world. Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, have best understood the Bible; but way-faring men, though fools, have better understood it; which proves, that it is a book containing plain truths, and expressed in a plain and intelligible manner. God may therefore, with propriety say in the text, “All the words of my mouth, are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.” But still,

II. It seems proper to inquire, why good men in particular find the Bible so plain and easy to be understood. Here I would observe, in general, that this is owing to their having good *hearts*, rather than to their possessing superior intellectual powers, or a larger stock of acquired knowledge.— God has given a good heart to good men, or that wise and understanding heart for which Solomon prayed and which he obtained.— And to this cause their superior knowledge of the will of God is ascribed in the text. He says, “All his words are plain and right to him that understandeth, and to them that find knowledge.” While in another place he says, “A scorner seeketh wisdom and find-

eth it not : but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth." Daniel speaking of his own predictions says, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand." God says by the prophet Hosea, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things ? prudent, and he shall know them ? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them : but the transgressors shall fall therein." But to be a little more particular, there are various reasons, why those, who have a *good heart*, find it easy to understand the will of God revealed in his word.

For, in the first place, they desire to know the revealed will of God. They sincerely and devoutly pray for this knowledge. David prayed, and said to God, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And five times more in the same psalm, he prays, that "God would teach him his statutes." This is the language of every good man's heart. He sincerely and ardently desires to know all that God has revealed of *himself* in his word. He loves God, and of course he loves to know every thing that God has revealed concerning his character, his conduct, and his designs. He is not afraid of finding any thing soward, or false ; or unjust, or disagreeable to his heart ; but ex-

pacts to find that which will enlighten his understanding, and rejoice his heart. And with such desires and expectations, he finds it is easy and pleasant to search the Scriptures, and find that knowledge of God, that David found, which was sweeter than honey, or the honey comb.

In the second place, good men have a heart after God's own heart, which gives them a spiritual discerning of spiritual things. Those who are benevolent know what benevolence is by their own experience of it ; and therefore can more easily understand whatever is expressive of it. The whole word of God breathes the spirit of benevolence, and is an expression of it. The designs God has revealed, the laws he has given, the promises he has made, the threatenings he has denounced, and all the truths he has taught in his word, are real expressions of benevolence. It is easy, therefore, for those who possess a benevolent spirit, to understand all those expressions of benevolence. Hence says the Apostle, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God : for they are fool-

ishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If the will of a pious parent be put into the hand of a pious child, he can easily understand every item of it, because he will not think of construing any particular article in a sense contrary to the spirit of paternal benevolence. Just so, the children of God, who possess his benevolent spirit, can easily find the true meaning of all that is contained in his word, whether it be a doctrine, a command, a prohibition, a promise, or a threatening. They will not presume to construe a chapter, or verse, or word, contrary to the spirit of true benevolence. They will not err in their hearts in misunderstanding the words of God's mouth, which are expressions of his *heart*. A holy heart makes it easy to understand the Holy Scriptures.—Besides,

Thirdly, good men can easily understand the will of God; because they sincerely desire to obey his will in all things. They desire to do what he requires, to avoid what he has forbidden, to escape what he has threatened, and to enjoy what he has promised. They delight in the law of God after the inward man. And Christ says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." A dutiful child easily understands the will of his parent; and a faithful servant easily understands the will

of his master. So the children of God, who desire to know and to do his will very readily understand it, and cannot easily mistake it.—So that the whole word of God is plain to those who possess his spirit, and delight to do his will.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the doctrine of decrees lies at the foundation of all that God has revealed in his word; then none can clearly understand any part of the Bible, without understanding that doctrine. It seems to be a very common opinion, that it is of little or no importance, whether men believe or disbelieve the doctrine of decrees, if it be true. But if it be true, that God had an ultimate and supreme end in the creation of the world; then every thing revealed in the Bible, and indeed every thing in the whole circle of creation, stands inseparably connected with that supreme and ultimate design. If that design be wise; then all that God has revealed in his word, or done in his providence is wise. If that design be right; then all that God has revealed in his word, and done in his providence is right. If that design be good; then all that God has revealed in his word, and done in his providence is good, and truly desireable. But if that design be not wise, and right, and good, then there is nothing wise, or right, or good, in the word or works of God. But who will say, that it is a matter of little or no importance, to know the wisdom, rectitude, and goodness of God? The first thing,

in the order of nature, that God ever did, was the devising, digesting, and fixing a complete, consistent, and connected plan of all his works of creation, providence, and redemption. And this plan, or ultimate end in creation, he has revealed in his word; and therefore it is impossible for mankind to understand his word, without understanding his eternal purpose, which lies at the foundation of all that he has *revealed and done*.— Though it be not necessary to understand God's eternal purpose in all his works, in order to know what commands, promises, and threatenings are contained in the Bible; yet it is necessary to understand his eternal and ultimate design in creation, in order to understand the wisdom, the goodness, and the justice of the commands, promises, and threatenings contained in the Bible. Should we suppose for a moment, that God never has formed any supreme and ultimate end in his works, what reason should we have to love him, to obey him, or to submit to him? Why should we love a Being supremely for creating the world, forming us and other rational creatures, and governing us and all other created objects? If he has not formed a perfectly wise, consistent, connected, and benevolent design; it is certain to a demonstration, that he never will, and never can form such a design. And if no such design has been formed in his own mind; then he cannot know, nor can any of his

creatures know, but the final result of all his works of creation, providence, and redemption, will be nothing but sin, misery, and perfect confusion. And would he be worthy of supreme love, obedience, and submission, should such be the final result of all he has done, or ever will do? What if we can understand the command to love God with all the heart, the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, the command to rejoice, that the Lord reigns, and the command to do all things to his glory; without understanding the doctrine of his own fixed, eternal, and benevolent purpose to do all things in the wisest and best possible manner; could we understand either the goodness of his character, or the justice of his commands, or the rectitude of his government? Or could we properly, clearly, and consistently understand any one thing contained in the Bible? It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to understand God's eternal purpose, or the doctrine of divine decrees, in order to understand his word.— It is of all doctrines contained in the Bible, the most important in itself, and the most important to be understood, believed, and loved; because all other doctrines depend upon it.

2. If God has revealed in his word, that complete consistent, and connected system of divine truth, which he formed and fixed in his own mind, before the foundation of the world; then it is necessary, in order to *preach* his word plainly,

instructively, and profitably, to explain, and prove, and inculcate the doctrine of decrees. Those, who view this doctrine as doubtful, or dark, or difficult to understand, would have preachers wholly pass over this doctrine, or mention it very seldom and cursorily. But people in general would have it never mentioned, only to disprove and condemn it. This would be a very strange fact, were it not so common. It is in reality strange, that those who profess to believe, that the Bible contains a revelation of God's will, or his ultimate design in the creation of the world, which comprises all his other purposes and designs, should suppose it possible to preach the doctrines of the Bible plainly, without preaching and inculcating that important doctrine, upon which all other doctrines of the Gospel depend, and without which they are neither intelligible, important, nor profitable. But since the doctrine of decrees is true, and the most important doctrine in the Bible, and the only key to unlock the hidden mysteries, or truths of the gospel, it is the indispensable duty of gospel ministers, to explain, prove, defend, and inculcate the doctrine of decrees. This they may do, since God has plainly revealed it in his word; and this they must do, in order to preach any one doctrine or duty of the gospel plainly, faithfully and profitably. If their people are unwilling to hear it preached, this is no reason why they should not preach

it; but a weighty reason why they should. They will continue to need to hear this doctrine, till they cease to disbelieve it, and become reconciled to it; and then they will desire to hear it, for their own edification, and growth in grace. Paul felt himself under indispensable obligation, to declare *all* the *counsel of God*, and not to keep back any thing that was profitable to men, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear. And his practice speaks louder than words, that it is profitable to preach the doctrine of decrees.

3. If the Bible be plain and easy to be understood ; then the reason why men find it so hard and difficult to understand its doctrines and duties, is because they are *totally* or *partially* depraved.— These doctrines and duties are *plain* to those who read or hear the Bible, under the influence of a wise and understanding *heart*.— It must be owing, therefore, to a *totally* or *partially* depraved and selfish heart, if any find it to be hard and difficult to understand the great and essential doctrines and duties, which God has plainly revealed in his word, and which mere babes in years and knowledge can understand. It is easy to see why all that God has revealed in his word, should be hard and difficult to understand, by those who are *totally* or *partially* depraved. For all that God has revealed in his word is an *expression* of pure *benevolence*, which is diametrically

contrary to every exercise of *selfishness* in the human *heart*. If we now consider some of the doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible, we may clearly see, why they appear so hard and difficult to understand by men in general. Why does the doctrine of God's decrees appear so hard and difficult to understand, by those who complain of it? The reason is, because that doctrine *expresses* all the *benevolence*, that God ever has acted out, or ever will act out, towards the whole intelligent creation; and which is diametrically opposite to every selfish feeling in the *heart* of every totally or partially depraved creature.—Why is the doctrine of self-denial so hard to understand? It is because it is perfectly opposite and disagreeable to a selfish heart.—Why is the doctrine of *supreme* love to God so hard to understand? Because men naturally love themselves supremely. Why is the doctrine of a man's loving his neighbor so hard to understand? It is because he naturally loves himself wholly. Why is the doctrine of total depravity so hard to understand? It is because men are selfish, and wise to justify, rather than condemn themselves. Why is the doctrine of regeneration so hard to understand? It is because they are so selfish, and love their own selfishness, that they do not desire to have it destroyed. Why is the doctrine of the atonement so hard to understand? It is because men are so selfish,

that they cannot be willing to be wholly dependent upon another for salvation. Why is the doctrine of election so hard to understand? It is because sinners are so selfish, that they cannot be willing, that God should save any person, if he does not save themselves. Why is the doctrine of eternal punishment so hard to understand? It is because sinners are so selfish, that they cannot bear the thought, that God should do right and seek his own glory, rather than the personal good of individual creatures. But to proceed no further in this way, I may say in a word, that the only reason why men find any doctrine, or duty in the Bible hard to understand, is because their selfish hearts blind their understanding and conscience. If their hearts were entirely or partially good, they would find their difficulties vanish. This thousands of atheistical, deistical, and erroneous sinners have found to be true, by their own experience.

4. If the whole word of God be plain and easy to understand; then we see why the plainest and most important truths in the word of God, are supposed and represented as the hardest to be understood. It is well known, that this is the case. No doctrines are so much complained of, as the doctrine of decrees, the doctrine of total depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of disinterested love, the doctrine of unconditional submission, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine

of immediate compliance with the gospel. These are certainly the plainest and most important doctrines contained in the Bible.—Why then are they supposed to be the hardest to understand?—The reason is plain; it is because they are the most benevolent, and the most disagreeable to a selfish heart. Sinners cannot bear to hear them explained, proved, defended, and inculcated; because they carry conviction and pain to their selfish feelings; and the greatest pain, that they ever feel in this life.

5. If it be hard for those who have a partially, or totally selfish heart, to understand the plain and important truths of the gospel; then all men are extremely exposed to fall into religious errors. Any errors are more pleasing to a selfish heart, than any of the truths revealed in the Bible.—Hence when sinners hear errors preached, or propagated, they are in danger of giving a listening ear. Errorists always have the selfish hearts of men on their side; and they never fail to address their selfish feelings with peculiar zeal and warm expectations of success.

6. If the doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible are easy to be understood; then men never have any excuse for not knowing their duty. They have no excuse for not knowing what to believe. And no excuse for not knowing how they should feel and act in respect to God—in respect to themselves—and in respect to

others. God never places any man in a situation in which he is under a natural inability to know his duty. And therefore no person can ever find an excuse for practical ignorance.

7. If these doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible are plain and easy to be understood; then men can never find an excuse for not doing their duty. They cannot plead their ignorance of duty, which is altogether sinful. And they cannot plead unwillingness to do their duty, which is still more criminal. If they neglect their duty they are slothful servants—and must be condemned out of their own mouth. Hear then and immediately obey this command of God—"My son, give me thine heart."

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#### THE MERCIFUL PURPOSE OF GOD.

Mercy is commonly and properly used in the same sense as grace. Grace and mercy are distinct from mere goodness. God may be good to the holy and happy, but he cannot be gracious or merciful to any but sinful and guilty creatures. God's having mercy on sinners, therefore, implies that they need his mercy. But though sinners are generally ready to allow in words, that they need the mercy of God; yet they are far from a proper sight and sense of their sin and guilt. Hence it is highly important, that they should be convinced of their guilty and perishing condition. Here it may be observed,

1. That they have forfeited all good at the hand of God. The least transgression of the divine law is a complete forfeiture of the divine favor. The moment Adam transgressed the divine prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he forfeited all future good. God might with propriety have refused to bestow any favor upon him in future. But sinners have transgressed not only in one, but in ten thousand instances. They have gone astray as soon as they were born and never returned. God has commanded them to love him with all their hearts, but they have hated him with all their hearts.—God has required them to do every thing to his glory; but they have done nothing to his glory.—They have lived in a constant course of disobedience to God all their days. By their sinful conduct, they have forfeited all good. God may righteously deprive them of life and all the blessings of life and never bestow upon them another favor.

2. They deserve eternal destruction. “The wages of sin is death.” Sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come. The least sin deserves an everlasting punishment at the hand of God, to whom it belongs to punish sinners according to their desert. Though all transgressions of the divine law are not equally heinous; yet the least deserves a punishment that shall never end. And though men

have no right to punish sin according to its desert, but only according to its tendency; yet God has a right to punish sin according to its real desert. Hence all sinners, without a single exception, deserve eternal destruction at the hand of God. And should he treat them according to their deserts, he would instantly let loose his wrath upon them and sink them into endless perdition. In this situation they constantly stand in need of divine mercy.

3. Sinners are actually condemned by the divine law. It is written, both in the Old Testament and New, “Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them.” This is a sentence of eternal death to every impenitent sinner. Accordingly Christ says, “He, that believeth not, is condemned already.” This sentence of condemnation God may any day or moment put into execution. Nothing but mere mercy prevents sinners, from day to day, from falling under the weight of that eternal punishment, to which they stand condemned. For the law, by which they are condemned, is perfectly holy, just and good.—And the whole intelligent universe must approve the justice of God, should he immediately separate them from all good to all evil for ever. So that they stand on slippery places, and the next step they take, they know not but may place them in hopeless ruin. This is a dangerous situation, and

the danger will appear greater, if we consider,

4. That God hates sinners with perfect hatred. He has always had his eye upon them. He has seen them in all their ways. He has looked on their hearts. He has seen all the enmity and opposition of their hearts to him. He has observed all the weapons of rebellion, which they have carried in their hands, and in their hearts, against his holiness and glory.—He has hated them, and still hates them, as really as he hates those, who are actually in a state of darkness and despair; and as really as he will hate the ungodly at the last day. Hence it is written, “He, that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” The God of infinite holiness “is angry with the wicked every day;” and his wrath and anger constantly increase. Sinners rise up and lie down, go out and come in, eat and drink, sleep and work, under the wrath of their supreme Judge, by whom they are already condemned to eternal punishment. Besides,

5. All things, with which they are connected, unitedly tend to prepare them for aggravated ruin. Time enhances their guilt. Religious advantages and opportunities enhance their guilt. Public and private instructions enhance their guilt. Their own feelings and exertions under the means and restraints of divine grace, enhance their guilt. The strivings of the

divine Spirit in connection with the calls of the gospel, above all things, enhance their guilt. They are every moment treasuring wrath against the day of wrath. They are in the most guilty, wretched and dangerous condition, in which they can be on this side of eternal burnings. They stand in perishing need of mercy. And unless mercy interpose for their deliverance, they will be punished in hell for ever, as certainly as they now exist.

It is now proposed to show—  
*That God will certainly have mercy upon some such guilty and wretched creatures.* God has said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Upon this divine declaration, the apostle asserts, “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.” These passages imply that God will have mercy upon some of the perishing children of men. And certainly, if they are all guilty, and condemned, and deserve eternal destruction, he has a right to have mercy upon one and not another; or to save a part and not the whole. Among a number of condemned malefactors, the prince always claims a right to pardon one and not another. And the exercise of this right is never deemed to be inconsistent with the most perfect justice and moral rectitude. It would be reproachful to the Deity, to suppose that divine sovereignty is not equal to human sovereignty; or that God

has not as good a right to dispose of his own guilty creatures, as earthly princes have to dispose of their disobedient subjects. But the point before us is not to justify the sovereignty of God, but only to show that he actually bestows his sovereign mercy upon some of our sinful race. Here then let it be observed,

1. That God has determined to save some of mankind. He has not told us how many he means to save, but he has told us, that he means to save a certain number, whom he chose to salvation before the world was created.—The doctrine of personal election to eternal life is clearly taught in the Bible. The apostle says, “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it; and the rest were blinded.” To the saints of Ephesus he says—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” He says to the Thessalonians, “We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”—

And in the account which is given of his preaching in a certain place, it is said, “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,” From these texts and many others, that might be cited, it is evident that though God has not determined to save all men, yet he has determined to save some. And if God from eternity determined to save some of mankind, we may be certain that he will execute his purpose and have mercy upon all those, whom he has chosen and appointed unto salvation. Though we could not draw any conclusion from the divine character respecting the salvation of sinners, yet we may justly conclude from the declaration of the divine determination, that some of our race will be made the subjects of grace and heirs of heaven. If God has determined to save some, he certainly will have mercy on the vessels of mercy, whom he has ordained to eternal life.

2. God has opened a door of mercy to sinners through the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ. Though God could not forgive the guilty without an atonement and though the guilty could not make any atonement; yet Christ by his death on the cross has made a complete atonement for the sins of the whole world. By his dying the just for the unjust, he has laid a foundation for God consistently with his character and government to have mercy on whom he will have mercy. We read, “If any man sin, we

have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And again—"God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him, that believeth in Jesus."— Now since God has given his Son to die, to make an atonement for sin and to open the way for the display of his mercy in the salvation of sinners, we may conclude that he will actually have mercy on some sinners and not suffer him to die in vain. Since God has made all things ready, on his part, for the salvation of sinners ; and since he has invited all to come and accept of mercy, he will undoubtedly cause some to enjoy the great salvation, which he has provided at the infinite expense of the divine Redeemer's death. He did not form the plan of redemption without determining the end to be answered by it, which was to display the exceeding riches of his grace in the eternal salvation of some of the perishing children of men. This was an end worthy of God to propose and worthy of God to accomplish.— And since he determined from eternity to save a certain number of mankind and since he has sent his Son to lay a foundation for their redemption by his death on the cross, we may be certain he will save that certain number, if he

be able to do it. And this leads me to observe,

3. That God is able to save all those, whom he has ordained to eternal life. That God is able to save the elect, or whom he pleases, will appear from various considerations.

In the first place, he is able to save them, notwithstanding their connections. Sinners are not only unwilling to be religious themselves, but that any other person should be religious. Parents sometimes oppose the conversion of their children and children the conversion of their parents. Husbands sometimes oppose the conversion of their wives and wives the conversion of their husbands. Brothers and sisters often oppose each other's salvation. The elect are often connected with those, who will do all in their power to prevent their attending to the things, which belong to their everlasting peace. But God is able to surmount all these difficulties and take one of a city and two of a family and lead them to Zion, notwithstanding all their connections can do to hinder it. He is stronger than the strong man armed, and can take whom he pleases from their most intimate connections and carry them to heaven.

In the next place, God can save the elect notwithstanding their situation. Some may be to appearance entirely out of the way of salvation. They may live in such places, or be so employed, that

the means of grace cannot reach them. Their case appears hopeless. But God can carry the means of grace to them, or bring them to the means of grace. He can alter their situation and pursuits, so as to have access to their minds and pour all needful instruction into their understanding. He knows where all the elect shall live and in what circumstances they shall be placed. And therefore he can order their situation so as to be most favorable to their everlasting good; and either save them where they are or remove them to the proper place.

Again—God can save the elect notwithstanding their ill-desert.— Some may be the very chief of sinners and the most guilty among their fellow creatures. But the blood of Christ is sufficient to atone for the greatest sins, and gives God a right to save great as well as small sinners. And if he pleases to take some of the meanest and vilest of mankind and form them vessels of mercy, he can do it, consistently with the perfect purity and holiness of his nature, and the rectitude of his law and government. Indeed, according to the scheme of redemption, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, it appears that where sin hath abounded, there grace can much more abound.— And hence the glory of divine grace will most illustriously shine in the pardon and salvation of the most unworthy and guilty of the human race.

Again—God is able to save the elect notwithstanding all they can do to prevent it. They are naturally as unwilling to be saved as the rest of mankind. And they are naturally disposed to do all in their power to prevent being awakened, convinced and converted. They are unwilling to hear divine truths; they are unwilling to understand them. They do always resist the Holy Ghost and oppose God in every step he takes to enlighten their minds and awaken their consciences. But he is able to renew them and to remove the ground of their opposition. He can take away their hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh. He can slay the enmity of their hearts and reconcile them to himself. He can make them willing in the day of his power to submit to the terms of mercy. He can shed abroad his love in their hearts, form them into his own image and make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus it appears, that God can and will have mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy. He can and will save all, whom he has appointed unto salvation.

The subject, which is under our present consideration, suggests the following remarks.

1. Since all mankind need the mercy of God, there is reason to rejoice that he will certainly save some. The doctrine of personal election is the peculiar glory of the gospel. The whole gospel

arises from the purpose of God to save the elect. The doctrine of election is far more glorious than the doctrine of universal salvation. This doctrine sets the grace of God in the clearest and fairest light. The grace of God will shine more bright in saving the elect, while they are surrounded and opposed by the non-elect, than it could shine in saving all mankind. God will do more in saving a part than he would have done in saving the whole human race. The salvation of all mankind would have been easy in comparison of saving the elect only, against all the delusions, wickedness and enmity of the non-elect. The power, wisdom, mercy, faithfulness and sovereignty of God are vastly more conspicuous in the preservation, and salvation of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Paul than they would have been, if they had not been surrounded by such floods of error and wickedness. And if none were left to perish, it could not have been seen from what the elect are saved. The endless wickedness and torment of the non-elect will forever manifest the exceeding riches and glory of divine grace in the salvation of the elect. There is then reason to rejoice that God will save a part and only a part of mankind.

mankind would ever have been saved, if God had not determined to save some. This determination is grace—astonishing grace. The objection of sinners to the doctrine of election is opposition to the riches and glory of divine grace. And such opposition is the most direct, violent and malignant enmity against the glory of God himself. Sinners hate God and the brightness and beauty of his glory as much as they hate the doctrine of election.

3. None can heartily embrace the gospel, who do not love the doctrine of election. This doctrine is interwoven with the gospel and cannot be separated from it. Such opinions, affections, enjoyments and exertions in respect to religion, as oppose the doctrine of election, oppose the foundation, on which the whole gospel and the whole glory of divine grace in the salvation of sinners, are established. To love the gospel without the doctrine of election is as impossible as it is to love the gospel without loving God. They, who hate the doctrine of election, hate God and the glory and grace of the gospel.

4. If God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, then none have any reason to hope they are subjects of his saving mercy, until they are willing he should

have mercy on whom he will.—So long as any persons are unwilling that God should have mercy on whom he will according to his eternal purpose for the glory of

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his name, they oppose God as really as any sinners on earth or in hell. And while they oppose God they are under his wrath and curse, and have not the least reason to think that they are subjects of his saving mercy. It is against the purpose and conduct of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, that his enemies have opened their mouths with the greatest impiety in all ages. And no one can be justly accounted a friend of God or of his true gospel, until he loves and praises God for having mercy on whom he will have mercy. PAUL.

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THE APOSTLE'S CONDEMNATION OF  
FALSE TEACHERS.

No IV.

*The Apostle's reasons for censuring and condemning false teachers.*

Paul was a man of learning and knew the difficulties, which are to be found in the arts and sciences. He was sensible by his own experience, that in every branch of knowledge there are some doubtful and difficult points, which no human understanding can fully comprehend. He had studied the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the original languages and knew there were many things hard to be understood and explained. He had studied human nature and was well acquainted with the prejudices of the human mind, arising from education, from peculiar connections and situations in life and from a thousand other causes.—

And above all, he knew by fatal experience the full force of religious error and delusion. He had been deeply involved in the most fatal errors of the day, in which he lived. He had fully embraced the false doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees. He had studied their false scheme of religion; he had heartily embraced it; and built all his hopes for eternity upon it. Hence he was most zealously engaged to defend his false scheme of religion and to oppose and destroy every scheme and doctrine, which differed from it. Besides, he verily thought he was perfectly correct in his sentiments. His conscience was satisfied and his hopes were strong and raised to the highest degree of confidence. He felt himself above refutation and conviction. He was not afraid to hear Stephen preach; nor to hear the christians dispute; but boldly presumed to attack them by his tongue, by his authority and by all the weight of his influence. All this appears from his own account of himself before his conversion. At Jerusalem he publicly made the following declaration; “Men, brethren and fathers, hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you. I am verily a man, a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way

unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women." Of the prejudices of his education he reminds the Galatians. He says "ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." No man was better able to judge of the weakness, prejudice and fallibility, which are natural to mankind than Paul. And he was especially acquainted with religious errors and prejudices and particularly with the religious prejudices of the Jews. The persons, whom he condemned, were Jews, who had been educated in that false scheme of religion, which he once believed and most zealously defended. The question now is, how Paul could reasonably and consistently condemn men for believing and propagating the same errors, which he once firmly believed, heartily loved and boldly defended. In answer to this question I would observe,

1. Paul knew, that the gospel, which he preached, was true, and that what they preached was false. He had altered his religious opinions. He once thought, that the Scribes and Pharisees were right in their sentiments. But he had found the difference between thinking he was right and know-

ing he was right. He verily thought he was right in embracing the traditions of his fathers and the doctrines of the Pharisees. But when he received the gospel from Christ himself, then he not only thought the gospel was true, but he knew it to be divine and infallible truth. And by knowing the gospel to be true, he equally knew that his former religious sentiments were entirely false and groundless. Hence he had a right, upon the ground of certain knowledge, to condemn the false teachers in Galatia. He knew what their sentiments were; for he had once been of the same persuasion; and he knew that they were false and contrary to the whole scheme of the gospel.—This gave him just ground to condemn any man, who pretended to preach the gospel and yet preached another gospel, or a scheme of sentiments, which struck at the foundation of the whole scheme of salvation through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Paul knew, not only the truth of the Gospel, but that its truth was level to every one's capacity. He perfectly understood the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. He saw the nature and connection of the whole system of divine truth. He knew that Christ meant his gospel should be revealed to babes, and be level to the lowest capacity. And he knew that it was clearly intelligible to every impartial and honest mind. He was a hearer of the

gospel long before he embraced it. He knew how plainly Christ and the apostles preached. He knew that they clearly proved from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior of the world. He knew that the doctrines of the gospel were plain and easy to be understood by every person, who was sensible of his guilty and perishing condition by nature. Hence he knew that the false teachers, who had heard the gospel and pretended to preach, might have understood it. Their errors were not owing to want of capacity, but to the want of an honest heart. And though they were sincere in their errors, yet they were not more sincere than he had been, while he embraced the same false notions. And he knew, that all the time he retained his errors, he might have seen the truth of the gospel and embraced its infinitely important doctrines. Hence he knew by his own experience, that the false teachers might have known the true gospel and preached it, instead of another and totally false scheme of sentiments.—And this was a good reason for his condemning their errors and their preaching.

3. Paul knew that their prejudices against the true gospel were no excuse for not embracing and preaching it. He knew what their prejudices were, for he had had the same to the highest degree. He once accounted the gospel a cunningly devised fable. He once felt perfect opposition to its self-

denying doctrines. His mind was once filled with bitterness against the true way of salvation. But he had been thoroughly convinced, that all his former prejudices and opposition to the gospel were totally groundless and inexcusable. He knew that his former blindness had been owing to the total depravity of his heart. He knew that his former ignorance had been voluntary and that he might, if he would, have seen the truth, and embraced the doctrines of the gospel, all the time they were opposed and resisted by him. He knew, therefore, that his sincerity in his errors was no excuse for his disbelieving and rejecting the gospel. Hence he certainly knew, that the false teachers, whom he condemned, were totally inexcusable and guilty for their unreasonable ignorance, prejudice and opposition to the gospel. He knew their prejudices and the cause of them; and he knew the cause was altogether criminal and ought to be condemned both by God and man.

4. Paul knew, that if these false teachers persisted in believing and loving another gospel, which they preached, they must be finally lost. He had experienced the fatal tendency of the very errors, which they believed and taught. They had nearly ruined him. They had kept him in that fatal ignorance of his own heart, which would have proved his destruction, if it had not been removed. He had found by experience, that

there was no other way of salvation than by faith in Jesus Christ. He had found that no man could be justified and saved by his own works and with an heart opposed to the true character of God and the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. Hence he knew, that those, who preached another gospel and embraced another and false scheme of salvation must be finally lost, if they finally persevered in their errors. Hence he had a good right to say, let them be accursed. Let those, who voluntarily reject the only way of salvation, revealed in the gospel of Christ and embrace another gospel, be finally lost. They were in the road to ruin and Paul knew it; and therefore he had good reason to warn them of their danger and denounce the curse, to which they were exposed. I may add,

5. Paul knew, that their preaching another gospel would eternally destroy all those, who heartily embraced it. He had experienced the danger of hearing and believing false teachers as they were. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He had imbibed his fatal errors. He had found the dreadful effects of erroneous instructions. He knew, therefore, that any scheme of doctrines, contrary to the gospel, would lead those, who heartily embraced it, to destruction. He knew the propensity of mankind to embrace fatal errors, for he had felt that propensity in the most sensible

manner. Hence he was most tenderly concerned for the Galatians, whom he had labored to bring to the saving knowledge of the saving truths of the Gospel. He knew, that if those, who preached another gospel, should be successful, they would forever ruin the precious and immortal souls of their hearers. And hence he knew, that he had a right to denounce their false and fatal teachers to prevent their own destruction. He well remembered what his Lord had said concerning the same sort of teachers, as were corrupting the Galatians. "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." Though, therefore, the curse denounced against those, who preached another gospel, is awfully solemn and severe, yet the apostle had abundant reason to denounce it and record it for the admonition of preachers and hearers to the end of time.

APOLLOS.

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SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. I.

*Messrs. Editors,*

Residing in a part of the country where I frequently hear aspersions cast upon missionaries, and where it is sometimes confidently asserted that no success has hitherto attended missionary labours, I have been led to examine the subject of missions in order to ascertain whether there was any foundation for such assertions. So far as they are believed, their influ-

ence counteracts that spirit of diffusive benevolence which characterizes so many of the institutions of the present age. Though it be allowed that the spread of the gospel in the heathen lands is desirable, yet if, after a fair experiment, it is found that all the money and labor bestowed upon the heathen are lost, and that all efforts to evangelize them are likely to prove fruitless—that “our missionaries in the east and west and south are wearing out their lives, and living on public charity without witnessing any beneficial result from their labors,” this fact would doubtless quench the ardour, and diminish the efforts of the friends of missions. But in examining the authentic documents, I have found that this objection, so often repeated against missions, is groundless. The fact is far otherwise and instead of presenting a cause for discouragement it only tends to animate to increased zeal and extended efforts.

The success which has attended the missionary efforts of the past and present ages furnishes indubitable evidence that these efforts are the means, by which “the Lord shall build up Zion, make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” The circumstance, that *no more* has been accomplished, is no cause for relaxation, while the fact that *so much* has been accomplished is full of encouragement. The *one* only shews that the means

have been very inadequate, and calls for their increase; while the *other* teaches that nothing done in this good work shall be in vain. In the words of another, “The wilderness has not assumed the aspect of Eden in a moment, and we did not expect it, but one green spot after another has appeared and every thing indicates that it will ere long open upon the eye in all the richness and beauty of a bright and vernal landscape.”

As the alleged want of success has probably prevented many contributing their aid to this work, and as no objection could be more groundless, a brief narrative of facts may be useful to the readers of your valuable Magazine. In this narrative the writer will studiously preserve the phraseology of the original and authentic documents, except when obvious reasons require a deviation. Before entering directly upon the consideration of facts relative to the success of missions at the present time, it may be gratifying to notice briefly the missionary spirit and labours of the first settlers of New-England. Our forefathers had a truly missionary spirit. It seemed to be a primary object with them to extend the happy influence of that religion, for the enjoyment of which, they came to this western world. They were not satisfied, when they had found an asylum, in which, they could worship God without molestation, agreeable to the dictates of their consciences, but they were desir-

ous that the natives of the wilderness should participate with them in the blessings of the gospel.—The most distinguished of the missionaries to the Aboriginals of New England were Eliot and Mayhew.

Eliot, commonly called the Apostle to the Indians, was settled in the ministry at Roxbury in 1632. He was happy among his people. But his benevolence was too expansive to be confined by parochial limits, while the heathen on his borders were perishing for lack of vision. He applied himself to the study of the Indian language. In a short time he was able to speak it intelligibly, and soon published an Indian Grammar, at the end of which he added as his motto, "Prayers and pains through faith in Christ will do any thing." Under the influence of this sentiment, he entered upon his missionary labors. Says his Biographer, "The tribes that roamed through the desert became dear to him, like his own people, and he often forsook the charms of civilized and cultivated society to reside with men, who were not only unacquainted with every thing called *urbanity*, but who wanted comfortable means of subsistence; with whom he would associate days and weeks to instruct them in divine things—and also acquaint them how they could improve their condition upon the earth. He partook with them in their hard fare, with locks wet with the dews of the night, and ex-

posed to attacks from the beasts of the forests."

When he began his mission there were about seventeen or twenty tribes within the limits of the English planters. Through his influence many of them soon become sensible of their need of instruction, and expressed their desires to change a savage for a civilized life. Undismayed by opposition, his labors were unwearied through all the surrounding country. And all his efforts were successful. He translated the Bible into the Indian tongue, and established schools for the instruction of the natives. The character of the Indians was gradually changed. In 1674 there were fourteen towns of christianized Indians. In 1687 there were eighteen christian assemblies and six churches. These christianized Indians held a rank decidedly superior to other natives.

Soon after Elliot commenced his missionary labors, the celebrated Mayhew imbibed the same spirit, and engaged in similar labors on Martha's Vineyard. After having learned the language of the natives, he went from house to house, to convince them of their fallen and degraded state, and inform them of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

He did not expect that the religion of the natives which was connected with the earliest associations would be changed at once for the christian religion. But by a disposition to encounter difficul-

ties and persevere amidst trials he was led at last to reap the reward of his labors. Several became seriously impressed by divine truth, and the way was prepared for public worship among them. The influence of this single missionary was soon very extensively felt.

Indians of distinction were favorably impressed, and some cordially embraced the gospel. Some of these became zealous in their efforts to assist the missionary.—Their influence extended to others, and soon whole families embraced the christian religion. On one occasion, after a discourse by one of the natives, twenty-two professed to be penitent for their past sins. At another time fifty came in one day to join the worshippers of God. Within eight years two hundred and eighty two were brought to renounce their false religion. The influence of this change upon the savages was very salutary. They now bound themselves to be governed by christian principles. On this basis a civil society was formed, rulers appointed, and schools established for the instruction of their children.

Finding his labors too extensive and arduous for one, he left the country for England to solicit aid. The ship in which he embarked was cast away and he was never heard of again. His venerable father, then Governor of the Island, had always taken a deep interest in the mission, and now finding no probability of obtaining

a regular minister, he was induced to attempt the work himself.—Though about seventy years of age he applied himself with diligence to the study of the Indian language and condescended to become a missionary among the poor natives under his authority. He labored successfully among them until he was ninety three years old, and then left the work to a pious grandson. Such was the success of this mission that this grandson of the venerable Governor, and son of the first missionary among them, had the satisfaction to see fifteen hundred praying Indians, which was about two thirds of the whole number on the Island. The success of missionaries continued in the Mayhew family for more than a century and a half, and under their influence the whole island became christianized.

By the labors of Eliot and the Mayhews the character and the condition of the natives were greatly changed. The influence of the christian religion was seen in all their concerns. They became moral, industrious, and in a good degree civilized. By these missionaries a good foundation was laid for civil and religious society among the Indians. Had their pious labors been followed up by a succession of faithful and devoted missionaries we doubt not their influence would have counteracted those causes which corrupt and degrade the Indian, or make him flee before the white man. But

in order to see the triumphant success of missionary efforts, we must consult the history of those stations where the heathen are not so fluctuating, as were the aborigines of New-England. This we propose to do in future numbers. From this brief narrative we learn, that the Indians are capable of being christianized and civilized, and also how much may, by the divine blessing, be done by the well directed labors of a few pious and devoted missionaries.

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**A PASTORAL ADDRESS  
TO THE CHURCHES AND CONGREGA-  
TIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
EVANGELICAL CONSOCIATION OF  
RHODE-ISLAND.**

*Christian and dear Brethren and Friends*—Allow the Consociation to address you on the subject of the state of religion among us and to urge you to the exercise of that charity and to those exertions which are necessary to our prosperity.

It is the glory of our denomination, and one of the clearest evidences of its being founded in the truth, that it admits in consistency with itself of the most extensive exercise of charity possible.—While we professedly believe that an atonement is made for the sins of the world, and that salvation is offered to all men, we consider and love as christian brethren all who give evidence of repentance and faith; and, while we admit the validity of the ministry of all other

christian denominations in preaching and administering the ordinances of the gospel, our communion is open to them and we deny them none of our privileges.

Yet this charity would be abused, and it would be what they could not reasonably require, if we were to consider the tenets which distinguish our own denomination from others of no importance; and, because we are disposed to walk with them in things in which we agree, we should conform to them in those in which we differ.

In some, there is a spirit of charity or candor, which leads them to confound all distinctions among christians, and while they allow them to be essentially right, consider the articles which distinguish them from each other as merely sectarian. But the words, denomination and sect, are far from having the same meaning. The christian religion itself is a denomination, yet is not sectarian, because it is the only true religion, and ought to be universally adopted. If there be among the various denominations of christians one that conforms strictly to the gospel, that denomination is not a sect, but is a true church, not indeed to the exclusion of other churches, but as pure from those sectarian principles which other churches have adopted, and by which they are separated into parties. It is our persuasion that our denomination corresponds to the gospel, and is not sectarian,

and is not founded in the wisdom and partiality of men, but in the word of God.

It is the requirement of scripture to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Without doctrines there can be no faith, for doctrines are the ground of faith. To contend for the faith, is therefore to contend for the doctrines of the scriptures, or the truths which are revealed and to be believed. To contend earnestly for them implies, at least, that we adhere to them in every trial and against all the opposition which may be made to them. This can excite no reproach or censure from christians of any sect, for if they are not displeased with our being Congregationalist Pedo-Baptists, they cannot be consistently displeased with our saying that we are.

While, therefore, we would recommend that charity which looks upon all churches as christian which are founded on the Lord Jesus Christ, and admits them to all the privileges of our communion, and desires and seeks their prosperity in the Lord, we would caution you against sacrificing to a false charity those principles by which we are distinguished from them.

These principles though not essential to salvation, we consider of importance to the purity, the edification, and prosperity of the church of Christ. In particular, we should consider it a great evil were our churches to concede

that their children were not proper subjects of the seal of the covenant; or that baptism administered in any other than a particular mode was not valid. We should think it a great evil, if all those ministers who have received ordination by Presbyters should be denied as not sustaining the office; and if those sermons which have been blessed to the instruction and conversion of many of our fellow men in successive ages should in future be discontinued; and, if that voice of prayer which has been heard in ten thousand of our congregations, and which, in a rich variety of expression has encouraged our devotion, and been appropriated to our circumstances and wants were silenced, or we were confined to any particular form however excellent.

In exhorting you, in the exercise of truly christian charity to support invariably the truths and privileges of our own denomination, we would recommend, that you should do every thing in your power to promote the cause of pure and undefiled religion. Be not partial in your views, but let Christ and his kingdom be the object of your regard. Attend with constancy on his worship and ordinances; walk in his commandments; adorn his doctrines by manifesting a christian temper in all your conduct. Promote the instruction of the young. Seek the prosperity of your respective churches so far as your connection with them requires. Send

the gospel to those who are destitute of its ordinances; and in secret, social, and public prayer, be importunate with God, that he would cause that Spirit which dwells in all his people to prevail over that ignorance and prejudice and depravity by which they are separated from one another, and cause them with similar views and affections to engage in the promotion of his glory—their own peace—and the salvation of their fellow men.

SAMUEL AUSTIN, Moderator.

JOEL MANN, Scribe.

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SCHEMES OF SERMONS.

No. II.

THE TRANSPARENCY OF FAITHFUL

MINISTERS.

II. Cor. xi. 6. *We have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.*

Doc. Faithful ministers manifest themselves to their hearers.

I. Show in what respects faithful ministers manifest themselves.

This they do in respect to—1. their sentiments—2. their affections—3. their designs—4. their exertions—5. their afflictions—6. their enjoyments.

II. Show why faithful ministers manifest themselves in these respects. This they do for the following reasons—1. consistency of

profession—2. propriety of character—3. dignity of their office—4. beauty of conduct—5. real worth.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. They, who are not honest in the respects, which have been mentioned, will desire to conceal themselves.

2. They, who desire to conceal themselves in these respects, show themselves to be unfaithful.

3. Deceitfulness in professed ministers of the gospel is inexpressibly contemptible.

4. A dignified simplicity will distinguish faithful from unfaithful ministers.

5. Faithful ministers will never desire to mingle with a crowd, or join a party.

6. Faithful ministers are not afraid to stand alone.

7. Faithful ministers are prepared to meet all classes of men.

8. Unfaithful ministers will oblige their hearers to show themselves.

9. The Bible must be a constant trouble to unfaithful ministers.

10. To faithful ministers the Bible affords abundant consolation.

11. Faithful ministers have every possible inducement to persevere.

12. The day of judgment an affecting day to ministers, whether they be faithful or unfaithful.

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 192.)

### PALESTINE MISSION.

Jerusalem, as to the general form, may be called a square, or rather a rhomboid, for the north-east and south-west angles are acute, and the north-west and south-east are obtuse. The east wall is nearly straight the whole length. On the north and south sides, the wall makes a bend outwardly, and on the west side it makes an inward bend, so that it would not be very inaccurate to call the city a heptagon.—There are, likewise, many little irregularities in the wall.

Near the bend on the west side is Jaffa gate, called, also, the gate of Bethlehem and the Pilgrim's gate and Bab el Khaleel [the gate of the Beloved, i. e. Abraham.] On the south side is the gate of Zion, called also the gate of David. On the east side, near the pool of Bethesda, is the gate of Stephen, called likewise the Sheep gate and the gate of the Virgin Mary. On the west side, between Calvary and Bezetha, is Damascus gate. These four are the principal gates of the city, and are always open from morning till sunset. There are two other small gates, which are opened only occasionally. One is on the south side, a little west of Mount Moriah. Maundrel calls it the Dung gate. The Mussulmans call it the gate of the Mogrebbins. The other, which Maundrel calls Herod's gate, is on the west side, and goes out from Bezetha. On the east side of Moriah is a seventh gate, or rather a place where there was one when the Christians possessed the city, for it is now completely walled up. Maundrel calls this the Golden gate:

We measured the city by paces, and the following is the result:

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| From the N. W. corner | Paces.       |
| to Jaffa gate,        | 300 } 768 W. |
| to S. W. corner,      | 468 } side.  |

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| to Zion gate,                  | 195 |
| to the bend in the south wall, | 295 |
| to the gate of the Mogrebbins, | 244 |
| to the S. E. corner            | 415 |
| to the Golden gate,            | 353 |
| to Stephen's gate,             | 230 |
| to N. E. corner,               | 360 |
| to Herod's gate,               | 359 |
| to the bend,                   | 250 |
| to Damascus gate,              | 150 |
| to N. W. corner,               | 660 |

The total is 4279 paces; and allowing five paces to a rod, this gives 856 rods, or about two miles and two thirds for the circumference of the city.—Maundrel measured the city, and judged it to be two miles and a half in circumference. According to Josephus, it was 33 furlongs in circumference before Titus destroyed it. Mount Zion was then included, and the city seems from his description to have extended further north than it does now. The wall of the city is high, but not thick. From counting the rows of stones we suppose the height to be 40, 50, and perhaps 60 feet. There is a castle with two towers, on the west side, a little south of Jaffa gate, to which travellers have given the name of Pisan's Tower. For a little distance, near the north-east corner, there is a trench without the wall, but now nearly filled up.

In regard to the population of Jerusalem, the following estimate seems to us as probably correct as any one we have heard, viz.

|             |       |              |
|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Mussulmans, | - - - | 10,000       |
| Jews,       | - - - | 6,000        |
| Greeks,     | - - - | 2,000        |
| Catholics,  | - - - | 1,500        |
| Armenians,  | - - - | 500          |
| Total,      | - - - | <hr/> 20,000 |

The Jews themselves say, that they have only 600 families of Sephartim, or Spanish Jews, and 25 families of Ashkenasim, or Polish Jews. But some think the Jews more numerous than the Mussulmans. They occupy, however, a much smaller part of the city than the Turks and Arabs. The Arminians live in and around their convent on Mount Zion; the Greeks and Catholics have their convents and houses on Mount Calvary. The Turks and Arabs occupy Bezetha, and all the eastern part of the city, and have scattered dwellings in every quarter. The Jews live in the dust between Zion and Moriah. The whole area of the ancient Jewish Temple on Moriah, which now encloses the mosque of Omar, is walled in, and none but Mussulmans are allowed to enter it on pain of death. In and near it are four minarets. There are two others on Bezetha, one on Acra, one on Zion, and two on Calvary placed on opposite sides of the Holy Sepulchre, like the two thieves on the right and left of our Lord.

The Jews have a number of synagogues, all connected together, in the quarter where they live. The church of the holy Sepulchre stands on Calvary. The Catholics have one convent on the same mountain. The Greeks have twelve here, and one near Zion gate. The Arminians have three convents on Mount Zion, a large one and a small one in the city, and another a little without Zion gate, where, it is believed, stood the house of Caiaphas, where Jesus was arraigned, and where Peter denied him. The Copts, Syrians and Abyssinians have also each a small convent. The houses are of stone, most of them low and irregular, with flat roofs or terraces, in the middle of which usually rises a small dome.—The windows are small, and those towards the street have usually strong iron grates for defence, and then fine wooden grates to prevent the women from being seen by those who pass.—The streets are narrow, and most of them irregular. There are but few gardens in the city.

Jerusalem is seen to best advantage from Mount Olivet. We however see most of the city from the terrace of the convent where we lodge. The Temple is seen to the best advantage from the terrace of the Governor's house. Here you see, not a single mosque, but a collection of mosques and oratories. The

two principal buildings are called el Aksa and el Sahhara. Around them the vacant area is covered with green grass, interspersed with paved walks and trees, which furnish an agreeable shade to the loitering Turk. Ali Bey has given a good description of the Temple, and its various buildings, and of the foolish opinions of the Turks concerning them.

Having given an account of the journey of Messrs. Fisk and King through the Desert, and of their arrival at Jerusalem, on the 25th of April, 1823, we now proceed with some extracts from their journal written after their arrival at the Holy City. With these we shall incorporate, in a few places, extracts from a private journal, written by Mr. King during the same period.

*April 26, 1823.* Called on the governor of Jerusalem with a letter of introduction from the Governor of Jaffa.—He welcomed us to the city, with many compliments. Toward evening we took a walk on mount Zion. A part of it is covered with the tombs of Greek and Arminian Christians. On the east and south sides, it is plowed and cultivated. Near the summit is a little wall-ed village, containing a mosque and a few mussulman's houses. The Jews call this village the City of Zion, and it is generally believed to contain the tombs of David, and Solomon, and the other kings of Israel.

The following day being the Sabbath Mr. Wolff and Abraham Shliffro, a Jew, who seems to have been convinced of the truth of Christianity, called at the rooms of Messrs. Fisk and King, to unite in the appropriate exercises of the day. A number of persons came in, in the morning, to purchase the Scriptures;—but were refused because it was the Lord's day. In the afternoon the Greek priests called to welcome the missionaries to the city, bringing with them various tokens of their friendship.

On the 28th, towards evening, they walked out from Jerusalem, and visited the garden of Gethsemane, the valley

of Jehoshaphat, the pool of Siloah, and the valley of Hinnom.

#### *Garden of Gethsemane.*

We went out at Stephen's gate, which is sometimes called the Sheep gate. We then descended the hill, passed the bed of the brook Cedron, which contains no water except in the rainy season, and then came to the Garden of Gethsemane, one of the most affecting and interesting spots on earth. It is a small plat of ground, with a low enclosure of stones. In it stand eight venerable looking olives, which seem as if they might have remained there from time immemorial. The side of the hill was covered with Turkish women, and the road was full of armed Turks of fierce appearance, occasionally firing off their muskets for amusement. It would have been unpleasant, and perhaps unsafe, to remain long in such a place. We could only walk over the field, and indulge a few transitory meditations.

Mr. King's first visit to the Garden of Gethsemane is thus described.

After waiting a little time for two men to accompany me, I went out of the city, passed over the brook Cedron, and entered the Garden of Sorrow. It lies at the foot of the Mount of Olives, and within a stone's cast of the brook Cedron. In it are eight large olive trees, whose trunks show that they are very ancient. They stand at a little distance from each other, and their verdant branches afford a refreshing shade. The land on which they stand, and around them, is sandy and stony, and it appears like a forsaken place. Around it is the appearance of a little wall, composed of small stones, and broken down. On entering this Garden, I requested the two men with me to sit down under one of the olives, which they did, and I went a little distance from them, to another olive, and read the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and also, in the four Gospels, the scenes of that sorrowful night, when the Son of Man was betrayed into the hands of sinners. During this, some dark, fierce looking Bedouins, armed with long spears and swords, advanced on horse-back, and I was not without some fear that they would think me alone, and attack me. After looking at

me very attentively, and at the two men under the olives, at a little distance from me, they passed by. The momentary fear which this excited, bro't to my mind, more impressively, the scene, when Jesus was betrayed, and taken by a multitude, who "came out against him with swords and with staves."

We then followed the bed of Cedron at the foot of Mount Moriah. The hill is high and steep, and the wall of the city stands on its brink. On our left was Mount Olivet, still covered with olive trees. Near the bed of the brook is a small monument, called Absalom's Pillar, and believed by the Jews, to be the one referred to, 2 Sam. 18 : 18. It is near the west end of the valley of Jehoshaphat, or the King's dale. Near this is another monument called the Sepulchre of Pharaoh, but why so called, nobody has been able to inform us. The valley of Jehoshaphat was deep; with steep sides. This valley, we are told, runs to the dead Sea, but how far it bears the same name we do not know.

#### *Pool of Siloah.*

On the east side of the valley is a small village called Siloah, and back of the village is a hill, distinct from Mount Olivet, which is called the Hill of Offence, because supposed to be the hill, on which Solomon built the High places, mentioned 1 Kings 11 : 7. Near the south-east corner of the city, at the foot of Zion and Moriah, is the pool of Siloah, (see Neh. 3 : 15) whose water flows with gentle murmur from under the Holy mountain of Zion, or rather from under Ophel, having Zion on the west, and Moriah on the north. The very fountain issues from a rock, twenty or thirty feet below the surface of the ground, to which we descended by two flights of steps. Here it flows out without a single murmur, and appears clear as crystal. From this place it winds its way several rods under the mountain, then makes its appearance with gentle gurgling, and forming a beautiful rill, takes its way down into the valley, towards the south-east.—We drank of the water, both at the fountain, and from the stream, and found it soft, and of a sweetish taste, and pleasant. The fountain is called in Scripture the "the Pool of Siloam." It was to this, that the blind man went,

and washed, and came seeing. John 9:7—11.

As I came from this pool, (Mr. King writes) a Mussulman Arab, that stood near looked at me with all the wildness of a man possessed of the devil, and endeavored, by the distortion of his countenance and the rolling of his eyes, to express towards me the highest contempt and spite possible. I never saw a more frightful figure, except at the Insane Hospital in Paris.

Leaving this place, we pursued our way amidst the roaring of wild Arabs and infatuated Turks, who seemed to be prowling about, in vast numbers, in the valleys and over hills, which made us feel that it was quite unsafe to be without a Turkish Guard. We had with us two men in the Arab dress, but they were Christians, and unarmed.—At this time there are multitudes of Turks here, with their women, from Damascus and other places, come as they say, to visit the tomb of Moses, which they suppose to be two or three hours distant from Jerusalem, towards the Dead Sea. They lie round about Gethsemane and the valley of Jehoshaphat, and it is dangerous for us to go much among them.

#### *The Potter's Field.*

South of this valley, rises a mountain of huge ragged cliffs of rocks, between which are little spots of cultivated ground. One of the most rude and rugged spots, and which is close to the valley of Tophet, is pointed out as the field purchased with the money, for which Judas betrayed his Master, and which is called the Potter's field, or the field of blood. Here Judas is said to have been buried, and perhaps it was here he hanged himself. Acts 1:18.—There are trees standing near the brink of huge cliffs and precipices, and if he hung himself on one of these trees and fell, it is very easy to see why he should have burst asunder, and all his bowels have gushed out. There are many tombs in it hewn out of the solid rock, and it looks desolate, and is uninhabited.

From the valley of Jehoshaphat we turned west into the valley of Hinnom, or "the valley of Slaughter," called also Tophet, where the children of Israel caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, See Jer. 7:31,32.—In this valley we pursued our way towards the west at the foot of Mount Zion

and returned through Jaffa gate, to our lodgings.

On the 29th they sold all their remaining copies of the Turkish Testament in the Arminian character, and many more were wanted. One man followed them half way to their lodgings, and begged them, for the love of God, to let him have one. He would not believe them, when they repeatedly assured him, that they had parted with the last copy.

#### *Visit to Bethlehem.*

The next day they visited Bethlehem. The journal continues—

We went out at Jaffa gate, crossed the valley west of Mount Zion, ascended a steep rough hill, and then came to a tolerable level road, leading S. S. W. In an hour and a quarter, we came to the Greek convent of the prophet Elias. Thence the road to Bethlehem is a little nearer south. In half an hour from the convent we came to Rachel's tomb; or, at least to the place which Jews, Mussulmans and Christians, all visit as such. Instead of a simple pillar, which Jacob erected, (See Gen. 55, 20.) there is now a stone building, evidently of Turkish construction, which terminates at the top, in a dome.—Within this edifice is the tomb. It is a pile of stones covered with white plaster, about ten feet long, and nearly as high. The inner wall of the building, and the sides of the tomb, are covered with Hebrew names, inscribed by Jews.

West of this place, at a little distance, is a village, now called Ephratah, which has been called by some, Rama. If this were one of the ancient Ramas, it would be easy to see the force of that glowing description of the scene which transpired at Bethlehem, when Herod sent, and destroyed the young children. The lamentations and wailings of bereaved mothers were so great, that they were heard even in Rama, and Rachel sympathized with them; and wept in her grave.

In half an hour from this tomb, we came to the city, where was born, 1800 years ago, "a Savior who is Christ the Lord," where "the day spring from on high" first visited our world, where the

Savior incarnate was first adored by man. As we entered the city, a multitude of little children, dirty and ragged, came out to meet us, and holding up their little hands to receive alms, they began to sing, "Pilgrims go in peace," "Pilgrims go in peace."

The Greek, Catholic and Arminian convents are together, a little east of the village, and encloses the supposed place of our Savior's nativity.

Here they were introduced by a letter from the Greek convent at Jerusalem. Having passed through the church, they were conducted to the spot, sacred as the birth-place of our Lord, and to the manger, in which he is said to have been laid. A great number of lamps were burning over these venerated places, and the whole wore an appearance of splendor, widely different from that of a stable.

#### *The field of the Shepherds.*

From this place a Greek priest accompanied us to the Shepherd's field. It is twenty minutes ride from Bethlehem, a little south of east. The way to it is rough and stony. Bethlehem itself is on a hill, which seems like a pile of rocks, with here and there a patch of verdure. Between the rocks, however, where it is cultivated, vines, figs and olives appear to grow in luxuriance. On our right as we descended the hill, was a little mean looking village, in which it is believed that the Shepherds lived.

We rode along among the rocks and cliffs, reflecting how David here once tended his flocks, and learned to sing the praises of Jehovah; and how the Prophet Samuel came to anoint him king, and how the Son of David here made his appearance in our world;—when, all at once, a delightful valley, covered with green fields, opened to our view. Its beauty was heightened by the barren rocky hills all around it. As we entered it and rode along, it was

delightful to imagine how a multitude of the heavenly host, came flying down from heaven upon the tops of the mountains, and hovering over this verdant spot, where the flocks were resting, sung, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Near one side of the plain is a field of olives, enclosed by a wall, with a subterranean Church in the centre of it. This is pointed out as the very spot where the Shepherds were, when the angel announced to them our Savior's birth. Our guide told us that the Greeks and Catholics had a long dispute about the possession of this place. The case was carried before the Grand Signore, and the Greeks by dint of money gained their cause. In this church the Christian Arabs now assemble for worship. Over this church, are the ruins of another church, and of a convent, which stood above ground. Under an olive tree near by, we sat down, and read Luke 2d: sung, 'While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,' and Hymn 3d, book 1st, and then united in giving thanks to the God of heaven, for the glad tidings which were here announced, and which had come to our ears in a far distant land, and to the ears of our dear christian friends, who were also at this time remembered by us. After this season of devotion we gathered some flowers in the field, and returned to Bethlehem. Many maps and geographies place Bethlehem south east of Jerusalem. It is in fact west of south.

*Missionary Herald.*

(To be Continued.)

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#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Several communications of real merit must, for the present, be deferred—being on subjects very similar to the subjects of some others which have already been inserted.